तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Lord Chaitanya's Greatest Gift

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Lord Chaitanya's greatest gift was his teaching that Krishna can be actually treated as one's lover. In this relationship the Lord is so much attached that he expresses his inability to reciprocate. Krishna was so obliged to the gopis, the cowherd girls of Vrindavan, that he felt unable to return their love. "I cannot repay your love," he told them. "I have no more assets to return." Thus, devotional service is performed on this excellent platform, and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave knowledge of the devotee's relationship to Krishna as lover and beloved. No previous incarnation or *ācārya* ever gave it. Rupa Goswami wrote of Chaitanya: "Devotional service itself is the highest platform, the glorious platform which you have contributed. You are Krishna in a yellow complexion, and you are Sachinandana, the son of mother Sachi. Those who hear *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* will keep you in their hearts. It will be easy to understand Krishna through you." Thus Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came to deliver Krishna. His method of deliverance was not meditation, fruitive activities, or scriptural study, but love.

We have often heard the phrase "love of Godhead." How far this love of Godhead can actually be developed can be learned from the *vaiṣṇava* philosophy. Theoretical knowledge of love of God can be found in many places and in many scriptures, but what that love of Godhead actually is and how it is developed can be found in *vaiṣṇava* literatures. It is the unique and highest development of love of God that is given by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Even in this material world we can have a little sense of love. How is this possible? It is due to the love that is found in the Godhead. Whatever we find within our experience within this conditional life is situated in the Supreme Lord, who is the ultimate source of everything. In our original relationship with the Supreme Lord there is real love, and that love is reflected pervertedly through material conditions. Our real love is continuous and unending, but because that love is reflected pervertedly in this material world, it lacks continuity and is inebriating. If we want real transcendental love, we have to transfer our love to the supreme lovable object — the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the basic principle of Krishna consciousness.

In material consciousness we are trying to love that which is not at all lovable. We give our love to dogs and cats, running the risk that at the time of death we may think of them and consequently take birth in a family of dogs or cats. Thus love that does not have Krishna as its object leads downward. It is not that Krishna

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or God is something obscure or something that only a few chosen people can attain. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu informs us that in every country and in every scripture there is some hint of love of Godhead. Unfortunately, no one knows what love of Godhead actually is. The Vedic scriptures, however, are different in that they can direct the individual in the proper way to love God. Other scriptures do not give information on how one can love God, nor do they actually define or describe *what* or *who* the Godhead actually is. Although they officially promote love of Godhead, they have no idea how to execute it. But Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gives a practical demonstration of how to love God in a conjugal relationship. Taking the part of Radharani, Chaitanya tries to love Krishna as Radharani loved him. Krishna was always amazed by Radharani's love. "How does Radharani give me such pleasure?" he would ask. In order to study Radharani, Krishna lived in her role and tried to understand himself. This is the secret of Lord Chaitanya's incarnation. Chaitanya is Krishna, but he has taken the mode or role of Radharani to show us how to love Krishna. Thus he is addressed: "I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord who is absorbed in Radharani's thoughts."

— From the introduction to *Teachings of Lord Caitanya.*

Pure Devotees and Internal Devotees

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

eka mahāprabhu, āra prabhu duijana
dui prabhu seve mahāprabhura caraṇa

[Referring to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Nityananda and Adwaita Prabhus:] One of them is *mahāprabhu*, and the other two are *prabhus*. These two *prabhus* serve the lotus feet of *mahāprabhu*.

ei tina tattva,—'sarvārādhya' kari māni
caturtha ye bhakta-tattva,—'ārādhaka' jāni

The three predominators [Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Nityananda Prabhu and Adwaita Prabhu] are worshipable by all living entities, and the fourth principle [Sri Gadadhar Prabhu] is to be understood as their worshiper.

śrīvāsādi yata koṭi koṭi bhakta-gaṇa
'śuddha-bhakta'-tattva-madhye tāṅ-sabāra gaṇana

There are innumerable pure devotees of the Lord, headed by Srivas Thakur, who are known as unalloyed devotees.

gadādhara-paṇḍitādi prabhura 'śakti'-avatāra
'antaraṅga-bhakta' kari' gaṇana yāṅhāra

The devotees headed by Gadadhar Pandit are to be considered incarnations of the internal potency of the Lord. They are confidential devotees engaged in the service of the Lord. — *Cc. ādi* 7.14-17

Here Kaviraj Goswami speaks about the *pañca-tattva*, gradually developing the narrative to describe the relative positions of the *antaraṅga-bhaktas*, very confidential devotees, and the *śuddha-bhaktas*, pure devotees. What is the difference between a *śuddha-bhakta* and an *antaraṅga-bhakta*? There are five principle *rasas* — *śānta, dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya* and *mādhurya*. The devotees in these mellows are all *śuddha-bhaktas*, but they cannot all be called *antaraṅga-bhaktas*, confidential devotees. *Antaraṅga-bhaktas* are in *mādhurya-rasa*. This is the difference between the *śuddha-bhakta* and the *antaraṅga-bhakta*. Gadadhar Pandit is in *mādhurya-rasa*, while the other devotees of Gauranga Mahaprabhu headed by Srivas are *śuddha-bhaktas*, pure devotees. Their *rasa* may be in the categories of *dāsya, sakhya*, or *vātsalya*, but not *mādhurya*. But if those devotees develop their attraction to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu then they will be elevated to the category of *antaraṅga-bhaktas*, internal devotees. When they develop that *kāntā-bhāva*, the mood of a consort, they will come to *mādhurya-rasa* and think of themselves as *gopīs*, with Krishna, Gopinath, Gopikanta, as their only husband. With such pure love they may be elevated to *mādhurya-rasa*. Unless they are elevated to that level, they can never be categorized as *antaraṅga-bhaktas*. This is the difference between *śuddha bhakta* and *antaraṅga bhakta*. Here [referring to the above verses] it is stated that the devotees of Nityananda Prabhu or Adwaita Prabhu are *śuddha bhaktas* — they may be in one of the *rasas* such as *dāsya, sakhya*, or *vātsalya*, but not in *mādhurya*. Although there are five *rasas*: *śānta, dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya*, and *mādhurya*, Mahaprabhu discouraged *śānta rasa* in his teachings. He said in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*ādi* 3.19), *cāri bhāva-bhakti diyā nācāmu bhuvana* — "I shall make the world dance in ecstasy, realizing the four mellows of loving devotional service." He only gave these four *rasas* — *dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya*, and *mādhurya*. There is no *śānta-rasa* in Mahaprabhu's teaching. Why? Mahaprabhu said, (*Cc. madhya* 19.218):

śāntera svabhāva — kṛṣṇe mamatā-gandha-hīna
'paraṁ-brahma'-'paramātmā'-jñāna pravīṇa

It is the nature of *śānta-rasa* that not even the smallest intimacy exists. Rather, knowledge of impersonal Brahman and localized Paramatma is prominent.

Why did Mahaprabhu discourage *śānta-rasa?* Because *śānta-rasa* is neutral, *nirapekṣa-bhāva*, a mood of indifference. In *śānta-rasa*, *jñāna-bhāva*, knowledge of the Lord as *paraṁ-brahma*, the supreme truth, and *paramātmā*, the all-pervading supersoul, are prominent — not attraction toward Krishna.

In his conversation with Ray Ramananda, all these *rasas* are elaborately described. Mahaprabhu was asking questions and Ray Ramananda was answering. This is found in the *madhya-līlā*, chapter eight, of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Text 57 there states:

prabhu kahe, — "paḍa śloka sādhyera nirṇaya"
rāya kahe ,— "sva-dharmācaraṇe viṣṇu-bhakti haya"

Mahaprabhu asked Ray Ramananda: "Recite a verse that speaks about *sādhya* and *sādhana* — the ultimate goal of life and the means to attain it. These two words, *sādhya* and *sādhana*, should be understood. They are most important in *Caitanya-caritāmṛita*. There are different types of *sādhana*. We follow *bhakti-sādhana*. *Sādhya* refers to what is to be achieved, the ultimate result.

Ray Ramananda said, "If someone strictly follows *varnāśrama-dharma* then one can get *viṣṇu-bhakti*.

Mahaprabhu said, *eho bāhya* — "That is external. Speak something more." Then Ray spoke about *karmārpaṇa*, whereby one offers the results of his work to Krishna. Again, Mahaprabhu said, "This is external. Go ahead."

Then Ray said, *svadharma-tyāga* — One should give up or go beyond *varnāśrama-dharma*.

Again, Mahaprabhu said, "No, this is *bāhya*, external. Speak more."

Ray said: "Superior to this is *jñāna-miśrā-bhakti*, devotion mixed with knowledge."

Mahaprabhu replied, "That is also *bāhya*, external."

Ray said: "If someone is fortunate enough and gets the association of a mahatma and hears from his lips with firm faith, *śraddhā*, about the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord Krishna, that is superior."

Mahaprabhu welcomed this, "Yes. *eho haya* — This is something. But speak more."

Ray then said that *prema-bhakti* is the topmost goal — *sarva-sādhya-sāra*.

Mahaprabhu replied, "This is certainly the limit of perfection, but please be merciful to me and speak more if there is more." Then Ray gradually developed his explanation up to *mādhurya-rasa*.

This is very important. One who is related to the Supreme Lord Krishna in *mādhurya-rasa* is an *antaraṅga-bhakta*, a most confidential devotee. Devotees who are related to Krishna in *dāsya, sakhya* or *vātsalya* may be categorized as *suddha-bhaktas*, but only one who is related to Krishna in *mādhurya-rasa* and is experiencing *kāntā-bhāva* like the *gopīs* is *antaraṅga*. That is the conclusion. Ray Ramananda will continue to speak, developing the mellow from *dāsya, sakhya,* and *vātsalya* to *mādhurya*.

We should chant Hare Krishna with the same feeling of separation from Krishna as Radharani was feeling. This is most important. Someone who hears from a dear devotee of Sriman Mahaprabhu can come to this *mādhurya-rasa.* Otherwise it is not possible.

In *mādhurya-rasa*, all other *rasas* are included. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami states (*Cc. ādi* 7.18-19):

yāṅ-sabā lañā prabhura nitya vihāra
yāṅ-sabā lañā prabhura kīrtana-pracāra

yāṅ-sabā lañā karena prema āsvādana
yāṅ-sabā lañā dāna kare prema-dhana

"The internal devotees or potencies are all eternal associates in the pastimes of the Lord. Only with them does the Lord advent to propound the *saṅkīrtana* movement, only with them does the Lord taste the mellow of conjugal love, and only with them does he distribute this love of God to people in general." ✡

— Lecture on *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta ādi* 7.14-17, Bhubaneswar, May 1990.

Puskar Tirtha and Nabadwip

Adapted from
Srila Narahari Chakravarti Thakur's
Śrī Bhakti-ratnākara 12.314-336

There was once a highly experienced old brahmin who was expert in meditation and a scholar in all scriptures. Although he was living in the sacred land of Nabadwip, he had great reverence for Pushkar Tirtha and strongly desired to visit there. However, due to old age he was unable to do so. He began

to privately lament, "Greatly unfortunate am I, who cannot see Sri Pushkar Tirtha, as it is situated in a distant land. I have spent my golden years in vain! I am doubtful if Sri Tirtha will ever favor me to go there." Observing the brahmin's miserable state of mind, Sri Pushkar Tirtha, out of kindness, appeared before him in his personified form, along with a new pond full of pure water. Sri Pushkar Tirtha Raj spoke sweetly, "Do not lament any more. Come and take your bath in this *kuṇḍa*." The brahmin became very happy and hastily took his bath. As soon as he got up from the *kuṇḍa* he obtained celestial knowledge.

The brahmin fell on the ground before Pushkar Tirtha, and with folded hands told him, "It is kind of you to come from such a distant place just for me."

Pushkar replied, "I have not come from a distant place. On the contrary, I always live here in Nabadwip. All the holy tirthas stay in this place offering their homage.

"Nabadwip Dham is the eternal abode of love and devotion and the sporting place of Sri Gaurachandra, who performed the *rāsa* dance in Vrindavan. He is Shyam in Vrindavan and Gaura in Nabadwip. This Kali-yuga will float in the river of happiness due to Prabhu's manifest and unmanifest pastimes. In this age, Mahaprabhu will distribute the precious gem of devotion, deliver the living beings from damnation, and reveal the glory of *saṅkīrtana*. The fortunate people of Nadia can see the pastimes of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu."

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Beautiful Gaurasundar

Ray Shekhar

For information about the poet Ray Shekhar, see Bindu issue 66.

(Sung in kāmoda-rāga)

sundara sundara gaurāṅga-sundara, sundara sundara rūpa
sundara pirīti rājyera jemati, sundara sundara bhūpa

Beautiful, beautiful is Gauranga-sundara,
Beautiful, beautiful is his form.
Beautiful is his kingdom of love,
Of which he is the beautiful, beautiful king.

sundara vadane sundara hāsani, sundara sundara śobhā
sundara nayane sundara chāhani, sundara mānasa-lobhā

Beautiful is his face; beautiful is his smile.
Beautiful, beautiful is his aura.
Beautiful are his eyes; beautiful is his glancing.
Beautiful he makes the mind greedy for him.

sundara nāsāte sundara tilaka, sundara dekhite ati
sundara śravaṇe sundara kuṇḍala, sundara tāhār jyoti

Beautiful is his nose; beautiful is his *tilaka*.
Beautiful is all of him to behold.
Beautiful are his ears; beautiful are his earrings.
Beautiful are their radiant effulgences.

sundara mastake sundara kuntala, sundara meghera pārā
sundara gīmete sundara dolaye, sundara kusuma-hārā

Upon his beautiful head is his beautiful hair,
Beautiful like billows of rain clouds.
Upon his beautiful neck swinging beautifully
Is a beautiful garland of flowers.

sundara nadīyā-nagare bihāra, sundara caitanya-chāṅda
sundara līlāra saundarya nā bujhe, śekhara janama-āṅdha

Beautiful are his pastimes in Nadiya,
Beautiful is the moon-like Chaitanya-chanda.
Not comprehending the beauty of his beautiful pastimes,
Shekhara remains blind from birth.

— Translated by Sri Dasarath Suta Prabhu. From *Rādhā-Krishna Nectar*, page 192. Published by Nectar Books. Union City, Georgia, USA. 1992.